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Western Colorado mining camp added to National Register of Historic Places Oct. 22 celebration planned in Gateway

GRAND JUNCTION, Colo. – A 100-year old abandoned mining camp on the Uncompahgre Plateau is one of Colorado's newest additions to the National Register of Historic Places.

Calamity Camp, a complex of stone and log residences and other buildings dating back to 1913, was designated into the register June 1, 2011. The camp is about eight miles southeast of Gateway, Colo., on land administered by the Bureau of Land Management.

Calamity Camp offers an excellent example of a western Colorado mining camp of the era. Its residents mined carnotite ore, which is an ore that is a source of radium, uranium and vanadium. Even though the camp was occupied and abandoned several times throughout the century, most of the original buildings remain unchanged but in various stages of collapse and ruin. Some buildings have had stabilization work to preserve the outward appearance of the original structure.

"The first miners who came seem to have been experienced in mining construction, but not necessarily building construction, so the buildings here are fairly unique," said Alissa Leavitt-Reynolds, archaeologist for the BLM Grand Junction Field Office. "In particular, the unconventional roof framework shows they were unfamiliar with standard construction techniques."

Until the 1930s, access to Calamity Camp was only by horse or mule, so construction materials were almost entirely from the immediate area. Milled lumber and nails were packed in at great expense and used sparingly, and buildings were located based on the lay of the land rather than to accommodate vehicle access.

To celebrate the addition of Calamity Camp to the Register, BLM, the Museum of Western Colorado and Gateway Canyon Resorts are hosting an evening celebration Oct. 22 featuring dinner, music and several notable guest speakers.

The Saturday evening event is open to the public and begins with a presentation about Hanging Flume in Gateway Canyon Resort's theatre at 5 p.m. Dinner begins at 6 p.m. in the Gateway Canyon Resort Ballroom and will feature John Horn of Alpine Archeology and Dr. Heather

Bailey, a State and National Register Historian, speaking about the historical significance of Calamity Camp. Dinner will be \$10 at the door.

For more information, call (970) 244-3000.

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